

Bulletin

'NO BULL' THERAPY

**On Being
Australian**

Lessons from the

Pacific

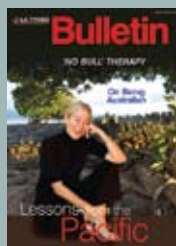
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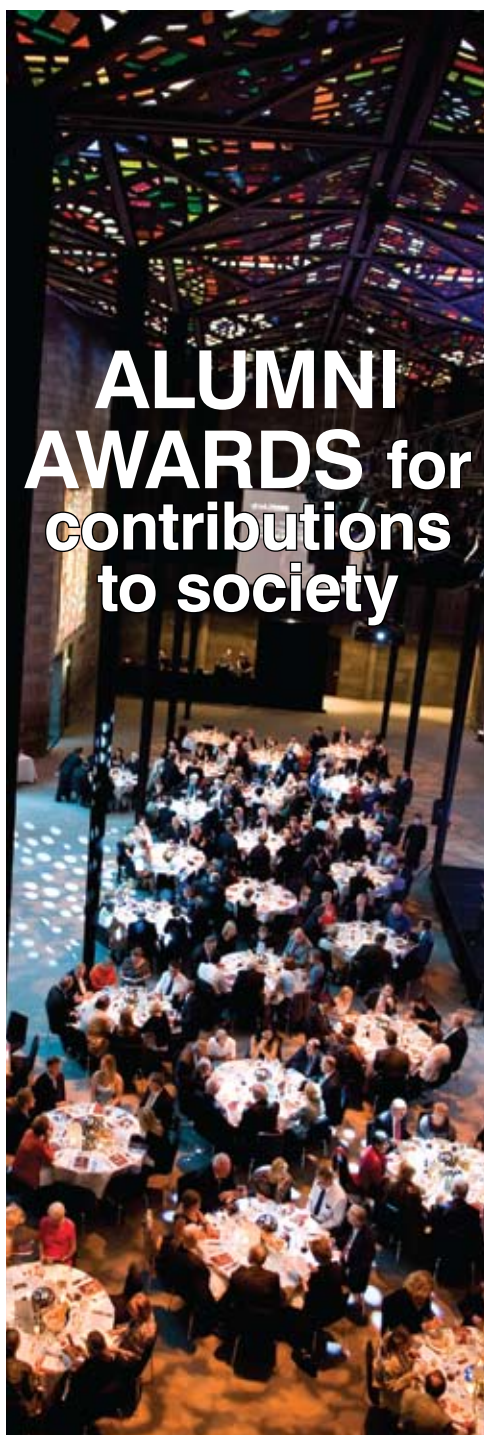
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ALUMNI AWARDS for contributions to society

NINETEEN ALUMNI of La Trobe University have been recognised for distinguished services to their community and nation at a ceremony in the Great Hall of the National Gallery of Victoria.

They were chosen from outstanding La Trobe graduates who have contributed in the areas of public health, publishing, community development and history, infrastructure planning, literature, political life, sustainability and climate change, science and biotechnology, art, banking and trade. A number also made their mark on business and society internationally, with four flying in from overseas to accept their award.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Paul Johnson said: 'It is a great source of pride for us that La Trobe graduates go out into the world and turn their talents to the advancement of society through research, business, community work and other forms of contribution.'

La Trobe celebrated its 40th anniversary last year and made a special effort to re-engage with its alumni which numbers nearly 125,000. Ten of the awards are from the 40th anniversary year and the rest from previous years.

Professor Johnson said the awards, and alumni relations in general, were of great relevance to today's students.

'Alumni relations facilitate a connection between past and present students through a mentoring program and La Trobe alumni work with current students to help them achieve their best in the transition from study to the workplace.'



Mr Fahour, left, with Professor Johnson.

2007 Distinguished Alumni Award recipients

Penny Davies, for community service in Bendigo and a driving force behind the La Trobe University Alumni Chapter in Bendigo.

Dr Annabelle Duncan, former Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer at the Bio21 Molecular Biology and Biotechnology Institute, now with Biosciences Research Centre soon to be built at La Trobe.

Dr Julie Edmonds, nee McMillan, Co-Director of the Carnegie Academy for Science Education in Washington, DC, USA.

Tony Ellwood, former Director of the Bendigo Art Gallery, now Director of the Queensland Art Gallery.

Ahmed Fahour, National Australia Bank Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer also serving as Business Ambassador for Melbourne's northern suburbs.

Professor Tim Flannery, internationally acclaimed scientist, explorer conservationist and author who was Australian of the Year in 2007.

Bernadette McMenamin AO, National Director of CHILD Wise, an international organisation for raising global awareness of the rights of children.

Dr Geoff Raby, Australia's Ambassador to China, formerly Australia's Chief Trade Negotiator and Ambassador to the World Trade Organisation and APEC.

Dr Paul Siu Fai Yip, foundation director of the Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention at the University of Hong Kong.

Professor Khatijah Binti Mohamad Yusoff, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and International Affairs), University Putra Malaysia. She was also that country's National Young Scientist of the Year in 1990.

Previous Distinguished Alumni Award recipients

Professor Ngoc Trang Thomas AM, Professor of Psychology at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and specialist researcher into the well-being of older people. (1997)

Professor Andrew Sinclair, Director of Early Development and Disease at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute and a member of the Australian Biotechnology Advisory Council. (1998)

Maureen Wheeler, co-founder and director of Lonely Planet Publications and Associate Professor in La Trobe's School of Tourism and Hospitality. (2000)

Dennis O'Hoy, former Head of Visual Arts at the University's Bendigo campus and foundation Director of the Bendigo Trust. (2001)

Terry Garwood, former Director of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria. The first Aboriginal person to hold a chief administrator's position in the Victorian Public Service, he is now an Executive Director in the Department of Infrastructure. (2002)

Crown Prince, DTYM Tuanku Syed Faizuddin. After studying economics at La Trobe in 1989 he joined Malaysia Airlines and was later posted to Madrid to strategise the airline's market in the Europe sector. (2002)

Professor Kateryna Longley, former Professor of Literature and Pro Vice-Chancellor, for Research and Regional Development, at Murdoch University, Western Australia.

Jacinta Allan MP, Victorian Minister for Regional and Rural Development and Minister for Skills and Workforce Participation, the youngest woman elected to the Victorian parliament. (2003)

Mick Bourke, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Environment Protection Authority of Victoria (EPA). (2004)

Discussions for new China links



LA TROBE UNIVERSITY is in the early stages of discussion for a part in a new venture in China – the Joint Research Institute of International Biological Medicine. The Institute, in Tianjin, northern China, is based at the Binhai New Area of the Tianjin Economical-Technological Development Zone and at Nankai University, Tianjin.

Jointly funded by China's Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) and Tianjin, it was established in 2006. Tianjin is China's third largest urban area, after Shanghai and Beijing.

Mr Wang Wenxuan, China's Chief Education Consul in Melbourne, said the institute would be an excellent fit with La Trobe's established expertise in agricultural and biological sciences, developing bioscience technology and training high-level professionals.

In partnership with the Victorian Government, La Trobe is establishing a new \$230 million world-class agricultural research facility, the Biosciences Research Centre (BRC), and finalising plans for the Australian Institute of Molecular Medicine (AIMM) – *see previous issue of the Bulletin for details.*

Mr Wang said the Consulate-General would assist if La Trobe wanted to pursue expanded cooperation through the Tianjin institute. Vice-Chancellor Professor Paul Johnson expressed strong interest as it related to key areas of the University's teaching and research.

News of the proposal came during a recent visit by senior members of the University to the Consulate-General of the People's Republic of China in Melbourne to highlight the continuing friendship between La Trobe and China.

Hosted by the Consul-General, Mr Liang Shugen, visitors included Vice-Chancellor Johnson, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Professor Tim Brown, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Professor Belinda Probert and the Executive Director of La Trobe's Centre for China Studies, Professor Pei Likun.

Commenting on La Trobe's efforts in developing exchange programs and cooperation with Chinese universities and research institutions over many years, Mr Liang said he believed the University's new leadership would reinforce the bilateral relationship and 'promote the cooperation to a new level'.

'The Centre for China Studies established by La Trobe University, Peking University and Beijing Foreign Studies University provides unique opportunities for scholars from China and Australia to develop collaborative research and academic exchange programs.'

Professor Johnson thanked the Consul-

Vice-Chancellor Professor Johnson, centre left, and Consul General Mr Liang flanked by Professor Probert and Professor Brown. At the rear are Professor Pei, second from left, and Chief Education Consul Mr Wang with Education Consuls Mr Zhu Guoliang, left, and Mr Zhang Yichuan, right.

General for his country's continuing cooperation and support for relationships between La Trobe and Chinese universities.

'La Trobe University will bring the cooperation with Chinese partners to a more extensive level. The University seeks to extend its exchange programs by encouraging more students studying overseas including China,' Professor Johnson said.

Other topics discussed at the meeting included opportunities for Australian students to study in China, PhD programs sponsored by the Chinese government, promotion of Chinese language and culture in Australia, government funding and higher education resource allocations. ●

CUTS IN WATER, WASTE AND ENERGY USE

La Trobe staff and students showed their commitment to sustainability by joining millions around the world who turned off their lights to mark Earth Hour. Vice-Chancellor Professor Paul Johnson sent an email to more than 30,000 staff and students, encouraging them to take part. La Trobe also signed on as an official supporter of the initiative.

Director of Estate Management Tony Inglis said the University had a long history of meaningful sustainability initiatives. It was making changes to infrastructure, practices and curriculum to demonstrate leadership in sustainability.

At the Bundoora campus, La Trobe generates its own electricity and hot water from natural gas using a highly efficient co-generation plant. Some of this electricity is fed back into the power grid for the local community. Despite adding significant cooling capacity to the campus last year, total energy consumption reduced by three per cent.

In the past three years the University has also reduced water consumption by 20 per cent and waste to landfill, through recycling, by 27 per cent. Last year it also achieved Bronze 'Waste Wise' accreditation and made significant efforts in transport infrastructure and carbon offsets.

'La Trobe aims to educate its students not only in their academic disciplines but in general community responsibility, and a large part of this is about investing in the future through environmentally sustainable living,' said Mr Inglis.

Camel ride to freedom for better health care

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY postgraduate health scientist Jonathon Ehsani has won one of Australia's most prestigious postgraduate prizes – the General Sir John Monash Award 2008 – enabling him to pursue his PhD in Public Health at the University of Michigan in the US.

The award recognises outstanding young Australians for their leadership, academic excellence and contribution to the community.

Mr Ehsani completed his Master's in Health Sciences in 2006, accepted a Dunlop Asia Fellowship with the Alliance for Safe Children in Thailand until March last year, and has worked since with the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine.

Encouraged by La Trobe public health researchers Professor Vivian Lin and Associate Professor David Legge, Mr Ehsani opted to pursue his studies, applying for both the Sir John Monash Award and the better-known US Fulbright Scholarship.

He won both, but relinquished the Fulbright in

favour of the Sir John Monash award, which offers a three-year scholarship valued at \$150,000.

Mr Ehsani was one of eight scholars presented with the award at Government House in Canberra. At the age of three, he and his family fled religious persecution in Iran, by camel to Pakistan, pursued through the desert by border police. He now intends to use that freedom to help make the world a healthier, more tolerant place.

His aim is to work as a public health practitioner and educator, and grass-roots activist for people-centred health care. Initially interested in becoming a doctor, he studied medical science in Sydney but changed direction after a year as a volunteer in Western Samoa. There he came face to face with the consequences of disaffected youth, social disadvantage and inter-generational conflict.

'I soon realised they didn't need more doctors, they needed a strong public health framework. I didn't want to do medicine any more. I could see

the bigger issues.'

Those 'bigger issues' led him to a Master's degree in International Public Health and frontline health work among HIV-positive drug users, and women and children escaping domestic violence in 'the rough part' of Sydney – and a final semester as a volunteer with the World Health Organisation in Geneva.

He returned to Australia in 2004 and came to La Trobe for a Masters in Health Sciences (Public Health Practice) which combines work placements, policy and academic work with challenging field assignments.

He spent time in China and rural Victoria, four months in India, and worked on water fluoridation for Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory.

He also became one of eight authors and a member of a La Trobe research team led by Professor Lin which contributed to a World Health Organisation report titled *'People at the Centre of Health Care: Harmonizing Mind and Body, People and Systems'* launched by the WHO in

September 2007.

'This project,' he said, 'was about the need for health systems to reorient their practice to focus on people and their needs, and take into account the cultural needs specific to each nation. It's a philosophical shift in the way people practise medicine and deliver health care.'

'It was a privilege to have worked with the team at La Trobe, to be given the opportunity to be part of that process. It's any public health practitioner's dream to be included in something that could improve the lives of so many people.'

In the US, Mr Ehsani intends to study the link between emotional self-awareness and risk-taking behaviour in young adolescent men and develop educational processes aimed at reducing adolescent suicide and anti-social behaviour.

He believes Australia needs new frameworks for tackling the challenges of adolescence, perhaps by incorporating

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From left, opening keynote speakers Professor Andrew Pendleton, University of York, UK, Professor Sanford Jacoby from the University of California, Los Angeles, US, with La Trobe's Dr Stanton, foreground, and Dr Young.

Conference helps workplace reform debate

'Timing is everything – and in the case of this conference your timing is spot on.'

With those words, Victorian Parliamentary Secretary for Industrial Relations Jaala Pulford opened one of the year's key IR events – the conference of the Association of Industrial Relations Academics of Australia and New Zealand.

Titled *'Workers, Corporations and Community: Facing Choices for a Sustainable Future'*, the three-day event was organised by La Trobe University's Faculty of Law and Management.

Ms Pulford said Australia's industrial relations system had been 'shaken to its core' by Work Choices. The labour movement had combined as never before to defeat Work Choices. The academic community also played its part, she said. Research which pointed out that Work Choices would 'undermine the conditions and rights of the most vulnerable had been totally vindicated'.

'I wish you well in your deliberations about what has gone before, and what should take us forward in the vital area of workplace reform,' Ms Pulford concluded.

Conference convenor Dr Pauline Stanton, Associate Professor in the Graduate School of Management, said the conference brought together 167 international and Australian academics, policy makers and practitioners. They debated industrial relations issues, many of which had been ignored in Australia over the past decade. More than 120 papers covered research from 15 countries.

Speakers included international experts

on corporate governance and labour, trade union organising, restructured working arrangements and gender and equity. Papers also focused on Work Choices and changed bargaining arrangements in Australia.

Professor Malcolm Rimmer, Head of the School of Business, said last year's Federal election proved industrial relations was a pressing concern for the Australian community.

'This was the first gathering of academics and practitioners in Australia since the change of government. It highlighted questions surrounding the real impact of the changing nature of work as well as the more complex global industrial landscape on workers and communities,' he said.

HEALTH SECTOR AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Presentations by La Trobe staff included a study of cancer workers in a public hospital, examining the effects of work-family conflict, stress and burnout, and how these issues influenced their intentions to leave their jobs.

This research, involving Dr Timothy Bartram and Dr Rosaria Burchielli, provided important insights for the healthcare industry, both in Australia and internationally, which faces critical shortages of cancer clinicians – nurses, oncologists and radiation therapists – as well other para-professionals, and has great difficulty in retaining workers.

Another study, in rural hospitals, explored the attitudes of employees to 'high performance work practices'. A key

feature of such practices, says Dr Stanton, is improved team work to improve social relationships and job satisfaction, thereby helping retain much-needed health professionals in rural areas.

Turning to the corporate sector, two presentations involved senior lecturer Dr Suzanne Young and a group of co-researchers. One, with Nina Hasic, asked whether there was a *'Path to Corporate Social Responsibility?'* arguing it was wrong to see 'growing environmental and societal concerns as impediments which slowed down business'.

The researchers said 'high-profile events, corporate governance scandals, accounting failures and contribution to global warming and environmental damage were serious problems for western society which operated in accordance with "shareholder value maximisation".'

'The sheer number of corporate scandals such as Enron, Arthur Anderson, WorldCom and others came under unprecedented criticism for committing ethical violations in the name of shareholders, and prompted a new era focusing on social responsibilities.'

Their study concluded that organisations 'had indeed started to move toward the "stakeholder" approach that focuses on a long-term sustainable business, whilst attempting to balance economic prosperity, environmental quality, and social well-being'.

The other study, with Vijaya Thyil and titled *'Formalised Partners in Success or Marginalised Instruments for Profits?'*, examined the role of employees in corporate governance in 20 Australian companies.

Its conclusions were less optimistic: despite talk of 'employee participation', the reality was that employees continued to be viewed as 'outsiders' to governance systems. Even where the rhetoric and systems appeared to integrate employees as a stakeholder – as in employees being offered share ownership schemes – they were not included in the 'strategy, vision and mission or in decision-making structures of the firms'.

'Thus we conclude that Australian corporate governance reforms in the last few years have clearly not resulted in any significant advance in the recognition of employees' interests.' ●

'Riverlink' graduates a first for Mildura

La Trobe University's Mildura campus recently graduated its first 'Riverlink Postgraduate Research Network' Doctoral students.

The network – set up in 2004 to meet the need for specialised training, education and research for regional irrigated horticultural industries – is a joint initiative between the University and federal and state government research agencies.

The graduates are Katina Lindhout and Joanna Tregagle who gained their PhD degrees for projects that assist two major local industries: grape and citrus growing.

Executive Director of the Mildura Campus, Kent Farrell, said they undertook a significant part of their study in the region. Dr Lindhout's research has led to a better understanding of mechanism that can cause deterioration of orange rind after harvest. She says storage disorders of navel oranges are a problem for the citrus industry, but objective descriptors for the various types of disorders were lacking and knowledge of the physiology underpinning them was poor.



From left, Dr Lindhout, Ms Philp and Dr Tregagle after the ceremony.
Photo: Courtesy Sunraysia Daily.

She identified seven distinct forms of chilling-related injuries and demonstrated that each was formed by different patterns of cellular collapse in fruit rinds. Dr Lindhout also found plant cells may experience oxidative stress, an imbalance between damaging free-radicals and restorative antioxidants. Her project was supported by the Murray Valley Citrus Board, Horticulture Australia Limited and CSIRO.

With salinity of irrigation water of great concern to the wine industry, Dr Tregagle examined the response of Chardonnay and Shiraz grape vines, each grafted to a variety of root stocks, to determine which root stocks coped better with long-term exposure to saline irrigation in vineyards.

She studied salt concentrations in juice and leaves from grapevines at two sites in Victoria and South Australia, comparing samples

from 1997 and 2004. Her work showed that the ability of some root stocks to exclude chloride diminished after long-term exposure to salinity, and that this was determined by mechanisms mainly in the roots.

About 70 graduates were awarded their degrees and diplomas at the ceremony which was held at the Mildura Arts Centre.

ART AWARD

Aboriginal graduate Belinda Philp, who received her Bachelor of Visual Arts degree at the ceremony, is also a winner of the latest Victorian Indigenous Art Awards which attracted a record number of entries.

She took out the top prize from 47 selected items – the \$15,000 Deadly Art Award sponsored by Arts Victoria – for her work, *Homage to My Mother, Family Circle*. The judges commended it as 'a poignant, dramatic creation ... which relates directly to the life of the artist and her people'. Ms Philp is planning a career as a teacher. ●

Camel ride to freedom *Continued from page 4*

strategies for emotional awareness and intelligence into all school curricula from early childhood.

'I think adolescent males have enormous potential, but as women are advancing rapidly in society, and their social and economic status increases, males tend to be petrified into all the stereotypes of what it means to be a man.

'I believe the ability to

develop emotional self-awareness and critical thinking would help young men to respond in more dynamic ways: how they relate to women, how they relate to one another, and how they navigate the challenging years ahead of them.

'We would then be able to raise a generation of capable young men able to deal in respectful and honourable ways with their peers and with women, and lead healthy lives

as fathers in the future.'

While his interest in adolescent health reflects his career experiences, Mr Ehsani recognises it may also represent his response to his family's terrified flight from religious persecution.

'It's a stretch to say that religious fanaticism and persecution can be avoided by minimising risk-taking behaviour, but I do have an interest in reducing the levels



Mr Ehsani with Governor-General Michael Jeffery.

of violence and intolerance. This has a lot to do with instilling the ability to think before one acts, to be able to make independent and critical decisions despite what the crowd may tell you.' ●

Lessons from the Pacific

Archaeologist Anita Smith puts Pacific issues on the international agenda

People in the Pacific, she says, have traditional knowledge about handling the effects of global warming that can contribute to international discussions on climate change.

A member of Australia's new delegation to the World Heritage Committee, Dr Smith recently joined La Trobe University's Archaeology Program as a Charles La Trobe Research Fellow.

As a Pacific archaeologist, she is keen to give a greater voice to what she sees as an under-represented region in international affairs.

She says people of the Pacific could make valuable contributions to discussion on the impacts of global warming on cultural and natural heritage because their islands have experienced the impact of rising oceans, major storms and tsunamis.

'Ocean levels have not been static in the past, and traditional Pacific cultures have learned how to deal with these changes,' she says.

In 1998, for example, when a tsunami destroyed farms and villages along the north coast of Papua New Guinea, traditional kinship systems enabled people to move inland, to live with groups in the hills until the coast recovered.

This strategy is underpinned by a system of land ownership which still exists through ninety percent of land in the Pacific Islands.

'In Polynesia many islands are traditionally divided like slices of a cake so that each kinship group gains access to resources on the hill, coast and reef. This influences the way indigenous culture continues in the Pacific and creates the region's cultural landscapes.'

Dr Smith – who holds a PhD from La Trobe and formerly taught at Deakin University – has just completed a report on cultural landscapes of the Pacific for the International Council of Monuments

and Sites (ICOMOS), the advisory body to the World Heritage Committee. She is one of three Australian delegates appointed to the Committee. The others are Dr Greg Terrill of the Commonwealth Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, and Jon Day of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

The team will develop Australia's response to forty or more nominations for World Heritage listing that come before the Committee each year and help highlight important cultural and natural heritage issues.

This year two nominations for cultural sites in Pacific Island states will come before the World Heritage Committee – a traditional cultural landscape in Vanuatu and an early agricultural site in PNG.

Chief Roi Mata's Domain in Vanuatu is a cultural landscape which includes ancestral villages of Roi Mata, a significant peace-maker in the island's history. The Kuk archaeological sites in PNG are important early agricultural sites demonstrating that agriculture developed in this region independently from that of the Middle East.

'The great advantage of World Heritage listing for a site is that it recognises shared global responsibility for heritage conservation and throws attention on it. It

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Dr Smith, left, in Samoa: 'The Pacific is the most under-represented region on the World Heritage List'

Archaeology



THE custodians of some of the world's most significant archaeological relics from the ancient Near East have a new home on La Trobe University's main Melbourne campus at Bundoora. This follows the official opening in February of the headquarters of the Australian Institute of Archaeology in a refurbished heritage-listed building designed as a healing retreat for Australian soldiers returning from the First World War.

The Institute has effectively been homeless since leaving its city location in Ancient Times House in Chinatown nine years ago. Its museum, library and educational facilities have been re-established at Bundoora in an arrangement with the University involving shared responsibility for repairs and renovation in exchange for a 20-year lease. After close to a decade of enforced hibernation, the Institute's priceless collection of Biblical relics and replicas, archaeological journals and scholarly publications are again on display

for scholars and interested members of the public – and only an eight-minute walk from Australia's largest Archaeology Program at La Trobe University. Relics of the lives of kings, queens, kingdoms and

deities of ancient times, and arguably Melbourne's best archaeological library of its period, are now in pride of place in the light-filled sanctuary of Building EC11 – a handsomely renovated 1920s style building with a serial history as a place of refuge. (Until 1995 it was also the home of Mont Park Psychiatric Hospital.) Archaeologists, dignitaries and scholars – including retired archaeologists and student volunteers who have kept the Institute going since the loss of its city headquarters – flocked to the official opening by La Trobe University Vice-Chancellor Paul Johnson.

They were rewarded with their first glimpse in years of many of the Institute's 10,000 significant archaeological objects – a collection only rivalled in Australia by the University of Sydney's Nicholson Museum and the antiquities collection of the National Gallery of Victoria – and a spacious new environment for seminars and scholarship.

The AIA's collection includes more than 2,000 pots and many scarabs, shabtis, tablets, beads and flints from the Near East and eastern Mediterranean. Much of it comes from Israel, Egypt, Mesopotamia and Cyprus. Also returned to public view in the Institute's foyer and anterooms are replicas of such antiquities as the black obelisk of Shalmaneser III (King of Assyria 859-824 BC), the stele of King Hammurabi



Top: La Trobe Honours student Dianne Fitzpatrick inspects a replica of the black obelisk of Shalmaneser III (858-824BC). Below: A replica of the Rosetta Stone.



institute finds new digs at La Trobe

(the sixth King of Babylon), the Rosetta Stone (an ancient Egyptian artefact instrumental in advancing understanding of hieroglyphic writing), and the original ancient gypsum stone tablet on which Assyrian King Assur-nasir-pal II recorded his genealogy, titles and conquests in the Years 883-59 BCE.

Re-housed in temperature-controlled facilities upstairs are many others of the Institute's evocative remnants of Biblical times – more than 100 delicately carved ceramic shabtis ('worker dolls', the ancient Egyptians took to their burial grounds to look after them in the afterlife), a 5th Century Aramaic incantation bowl believed to have been

buried near the entrance of an ancient Jewish shop in Mesopotamia to ward off ill-fortune, and an ancient Egyptian child Mummy acquired in 1965.

La Trobe University is working with the Institute to re-invigorate its involvement with secondary school studies in ancient

history – through two pilot schools in Melbourne, with plans to extend this to other secondary schools in 2009. Professor Johnson said the involvement with the AIA was one of many ways that La Trobe could further its academic and intellectual pursuits outside the traditional bounds of the University.

'It is difficult for the Institute to see its worth when most of its collection of artefacts has been tucked away in cardboard boxes. What we are doing here is providing an environment in which this material can be displayed for people to study and admire, or for school children to play with replicas of the artefacts in class so that school children as well as scholars can further their interest.

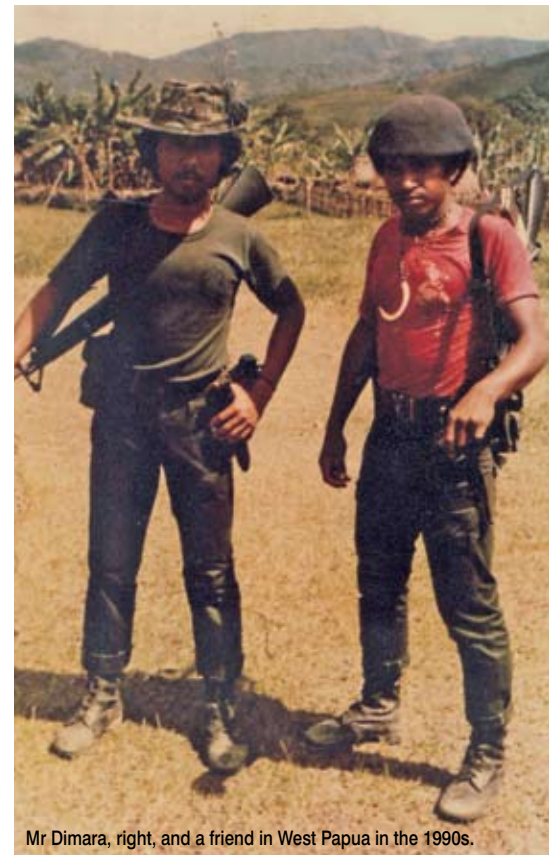
'An understanding of the past is a basic part of humanity, it's part of what makes us different from other species, and at this University we have a clear educational and moral responsibility to ensure that we facilitate that at all levels, whether for scientists in the field, university students, or researchers who may come here from around the globe,' Professor Johnson said. AIA Director Christopher Davey said that even at the Institute's former location it had been difficult to make its materials available for research – because of limited space and the fact that a lot of it had not been catalogued.

'We now have the space, and we've put a lot of effort into making sure the artefacts are catalogued so we can make the material available for research and study, and as a teaching resource,' he said.

The Head of La Trobe's Archaeology Program, Professor Tim Murray, said the Program's association with the institute would strengthen its research and teaching and improve its capacity to reach primary and secondary schools with 'a message about archaeology.' ●

Above left: Institute Director Davey and Professor Murray holding an Assyrian helmet similar to those depicted in the replica of the Assyrian reliefs of King Sennacherib of Assyria (705-681BC).

Left: An Aramaic incantation bowl from 5th Century Mesopotamia.



Mr Dimara, right, and a friend in West Papua in the 1990s.

Words from the border

A West Papuan tells his story

Autobiography is a political act, particularly when it comes from a freedom fighter and is the first by a West Papuan.

Dr John Stuyfbergen, a tutor in life-writing at La Trobe University, is helping George Dimara tell his story so that the rights for self-determination of his people are placed in the public arena.

Born in Biak in West Papua, George Dimara joined the Indonesian Army at the age of 19. With some others he deserted after having been promoted to sergeant and joined the guerilla forces fighting in the jungle. When he finally sought asylum in Australia, he was imprisoned first in Brisbane, then in Baxter detention centre.

Last Christmas he gained refugee status in Australia and is writing the sorry tale of his life as an example of the oppression of his people.

'I think his work gives a very clear and detailed story of West Papua,' Dr Stuyfbergen says. 'He writes about all his family and friends who have been affected

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Words from the Border

by the Indonesian rule.’

The book could be compared to testimonies by Aboriginal people, he says.

‘He makes sure that places and names are correct. His work is about making people know what has happened.’

One of the chapters details how he escaped from Black Water refugee camp in 1985 to become a resistance leader. He led a group of 50 to 60 jungle fighters along the border.

‘The news of our escape had not only reached the police in Vanimo but also the local population, as it had been broadcast on the news of NBC radio and in the local newspaper, the *Post Courier*,’ Mr Dimara writes.

‘We kept resting that day to preserve our energy for the border crossing into West Papua. The younger students kept themselves busy cooking lunch in an old pot, that one of the escapees, Pahiri, had brought with him. We ate rice with fish. Banana leaves served as plates. As the cooking pot was too small to provide all the food at once, we ate in groups of five.

‘When everybody had eaten we rested till it was dark and were ready for our next move towards the border villages, Mosu and Utung. To improve our progress we decided to follow the main road. We instructed all the new people how to disappear quickly into the bush and to lay down whenever the sound or the lights of oncoming cars were spotted.

‘Having walked for about five kilometres, a police patrol car came suddenly from behind us. In the pitch darkness its big lights could be seen from quite a distance. Our group immediately lay down in the high grass beside the road. However, Pahiri forgot to take his cooking pot with him to the bushes and left it in the middle of the road.

‘Luckily, I was laying behind a big rock, which I rolled to the middle of the road, hoping that it would hide the contours of the cooking pot. After a couple of seconds the police car arrived at high speed and passed us by, not noticing us, or the pot in the darkness.’

Dr Stuyfbergen worked as a foreign correspondent in West Papua during the 1960s for the Dutch newspaper *Volkskrant*.

He did his PhD at La Trobe’s Centre for Biography and Autobiography on refugee autobiographies. His findings are pertinent to the Damira account.

‘We are not necessarily the lucky country for refugees,’ he says. ‘Most of them didn’t want to come to Australia. Their autobiographies express how they live with a dual cultural background.’

He is taking great care with the text to ensure that he does not interpret it from a Western point of view. It is expected to be published by Geromondo this year. ●

Lessons from the Pacific Continued from page 7

becomes a flagship of best practice and this can flow on to other sites.’

The Pacific, says Dr Smith, is the most under-represented region on the World Heritage List, which now includes more than 750 sites. Cultural landscapes in the region are layered with stories of human existence and have great potential for World Heritage nomination.

Taputapuatea in Tahiti is one such place. It is known to Polynesians as a marae site. These are special sacred places, important for meetings and ceremonies. Many Polynesians consider Taputapuatea to be their spiritual homeland.

The site is also important in European stories of the Pacific. When Captain Cook arrived there, he found a large sea-faring centre where people came to

learn about navigation and boat-building. The double-hulled ocean-going canoes constructed there were almost as big as Cook’s own ship.

Cook’s descriptions are vivid and inspiring, Dr Smith says, but they are just part of the evidence needed to gain the site World Heritage listing for sites like Taputapuatea.

‘Through archaeological, and ethnohistoric research we are trying to develop a chronology. How old is the site? At what stage was it an important centre? What oral traditions are associated with the site? How does it connect to other marae sites? What is its settlement history of the place?’

Dr Smith calls this multi-layered approach ‘mapping’. She will combine

DEPRESSION AFTER ABORTION

Partner violence has been identified as the ‘missing link’ on the vexed question of a possible connection between abortion and depression.

This follows an analysis by Dr Angela Taft from La Trobe University Mother and Child Health Research. Her findings were presented to a recent International Congress on Women’s Mental Health in Melbourne.

Dr Taft and colleague Lyn Watson argue the very few studies which have found a connection between abortion and depression have been fundamentally flawed as they did not take account of partner violence.

‘The evidence we have found is clear: partner violence and depression are significantly linked. Abortion is not the important factor,’ said Dr Taft.

Using data from the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women’s Health, the researchers found that abortion had a small but statistically non-significant relationship to depression – the same as having two or more children when young. In contrast, partner violence had a strong and four-fold effect on depression.

‘If we want to reduce depression among women we would be more effective reducing the unwanted pregnancies, miscarriages, adverse pregnancy outcomes and excess births linked with intimate partner violence – which we know causes depression – than by restricting women’s access to abortion services,’ Dr Taft said. ●

oral history with modern geographic information systems; stories with visual representations of resources.

‘Traditional stories are still very strong. People have a way of seeing the landscape with respect to their ancestors. We want to layer our archaeological evidence with these oral traditions.’

Dr Smith finds the strength of traditional ties inspiring. ‘People in Tahiti are sophisticated in a Western sense, but if you scratch the surface there are a lot of layers underneath. People have Polynesian ways of seeing the world. I am surprised, and pleased, that their cultural knowledge is so strong.’ ●

On being Australian

A new study delves into the hearts of immigrants

BEING AUSTRALIAN is a complex and passionate issue that cannot be reduced to twenty questions on a citizenship test, says La Trobe University social scientist Dr Anthony Moran.

Dr Moran, co-director of Nations and Identities in La Trobe's recently re-named Thesis Eleven Centre for Cultural Sociology, has just completed an in-depth study of first and second generation immigrants that explores their feelings and ideas about being Australian.

The study comes at a time when the new Rudd Labor government is reviewing the controversial citizenship test. It shows that the connections people make to Australian culture are emotional ones and that it is insulting for the government to challenge the allegiance of people to their

new country with a test.

'I don't see the point of a citizenship test,' says Dr Moran. 'In the '80s we seemed to take the opposite view. The government wanted to encourage people to be citizens. Why turn around the other way and test people to see if they're good enough to be citizens?'

Australian identity is a contentious issue. Some studies have suggested that a dominant racialised Australian identity still sits beneath our multicultural posturing which excludes immigrants. The La Trobe study – part of a large interview project conducted by Dr Moran and Professor of Politics, Judith Brett – one of the few empirical investigations of concepts of 'Australianness', does not support this view.

Participants were asked questions like: 'When you

think of Australia, what images come to mind?'; 'Do you feel patriotic or proud to be Australian? At what times or in relation to what things or events?'; 'Is there a typical Australian?'; 'What does being an Australian mean to you?' Only five of the 27 respondents said that they did not identify as Australian. Another five expressed feelings of being torn or ambivalent about their identity. The remaining 17 identified as Australians, many of them strongly.

Dr Moran recently presented a paper that outlined the range of responses to this complex issue of identity. Even those who still identified with their former cultures, incorporated some Australian values, he says.

One woman who called herself Croatian said she liked the 'friendliness', 'informality'

and humour of Australians, especially the ability to laugh at themselves: 'And what I really like about Australians is when you meet someone, you can automatically start stirring them up. Like you can really take the Mickey out of somebody that you've just met. I reckon that's fantastic,' she said. Dr Moran suggests that she calls herself Croatian, not because of any racist overtones to Australian culture, but because Croatian culture and tradition formed her.

One of the most clear-cut of the non-identifiers was Angelo who arrived in Australia as a young adult in the 1950s. Australian society was ill-formed when he arrived, he said, and he felt it was part of his destiny to make it into a better, more sophisticated place.

'Dual identities reflect the

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HELPING OLDER DRIVERS STAY ON THE ROADS

OLDER PEOPLE have bad press when it comes to driving. Some states have mandatory age-based testing to deal with the perceived problem. Victoria has a different system based on a more targeted approach. Drivers who have impairments from illness, injury or age-related health decline may need to see an occupational therapist to have their driving assessed, says La Trobe University Associate Professor of Occupational Therapy, Carolyn Unsworth.

Instead of cancelling their licences, tried methods for testing and training older and functionally impaired drivers can help them stay on the road safely and for longer. 'We are about looking after all drivers but especially older drivers and keeping them on the road as long as possible,' Dr Unsworth says.

Tips for the older driver include avoiding peak hour, night driving and rainy conditions and sticking to local areas.

Occupational therapists undertake rigorous postgraduate study at La Trobe to become driver assessors registered with VicRoads. They learn how to conduct clinic-based assessments of a person's reaction time, cognition and perception, vision and physical abilities, and detailed on-road testing.

Dr Unsworth says assessment is quite comprehensive, and more than 3,500 people are tested annually in Victoria. 'In fact, occupational therapists' judgements on fitness to drive have never been overturned if challenged in court.'

However, she says one of the issues with the current approach is lack of consistency in the assessments chosen by occupational therapists. 'This means older people may have different assessment experiences with potentially different outcomes.'

Dr Unsworth has received funding from the RACV to develop a standardised set of off-road tests which will identify those most at risk. The study will look at which tests provide the best information and are most predictive of a person's on-road performance. Four hundred client files will be audited and 60 people will be followed through the driver assessment process at a local clinic.

Victorian occupational therapists, says Dr Unsworth, are leaders in this field with more than 20 years of experience and a close working relationship with the licensing authority that is envied by international colleagues.

She puts this down to the fact that occupational therapists, under the 'Road Safety Act 1986 of Victoria', are able to test drivers and report directly to the licensing authority – as well as the development of both competency standards for driver assessors and licensing authority guidelines. ●

On being Australian

Continued from page 11

growing inter-connectedness of the world.'

Carla, a 26 year old nurse of Austrian background, 'felt different' to the other children at school, because of her European heritage but she conceded that she didn't mind the 'free and easy attitudes of Australians'.

Dora, Australian born of Chinese background, and Nina, born in Sri Lanka and having migrated to Australia as a young girl, did not see themselves as Australian, but they did not identify as Chinese or Sri Lankan either.

'I don't think I have a national identity to tell you the truth. I don't think I'm Australian and I don't think I'm Sri Lankan as in the sense that, you know, culturally or anything else, religiously,' Nina said. Dora said simply: 'I just feel like a person really, not an Australian.' Neither Dora nor Nina expressed any desire for a stronger or more coherent identity. Nina felt that if you'd never had a national identity then you can hardly miss it.

'It wasn't experiences of exclusion or racism that made both of them reject an Australian identity. It was more a case that Australian identity had no imaginative hold over either of them,' Dr Moran concludes.

'The point about all the non-identifiers is that none of them overtly expressed feelings of being rejected by Australia, or of being excluded by Australian identity.'

Those who embraced Australian identity did so with varying degrees of passion, he says. Frieda, an Italian dressmaker from Trieste, when asked what images came to mind when she thought of

Australia, emphasised the freedom. 'I feel that living in Australia there is no barrier to the wishes of an individual, for a human being of wanting to develop, in every way. There are no barriers, you really are free.'

Another young woman, Helen, of Lebanese Muslim background and Australian born, said 'I always identify myself as Australian.' She said that calling herself Australian caused some stir among her migrant friends.

Susan, who had migrated from the Philippines in 1988, and worked in a call center, stressed that she felt very Australian. She had taken out Australian citizenship because she wanted to make sure that she could serve in the armed forces if Australia needed to be defended.

'I got my Australian citizenship done in case Australia needs me, if there was a war, then I'd be there which I think is fair enough. I'm from Asia but I'm now Australian.'

Sometimes respondents expressed a complex sense of identity – for example, feeling that parts of themselves were Greek, or Vietnamese, or Lebanese – but nearly all of these also said that, fundamentally, they were Australian.

'These expressions of dual identities reflect the growing interconnectedness of the world, and the opportunities for peoples to connect with ethnic and national origins in a more intense and ongoing way, through the media, the internet, the telephone and visits to homelands. They show that identity can be a hybrid phenomenon, rather than an exclusive, monolithic one.' ●

'No bull therapy' helps farmers through drought

THE DROUGHT may have broken in some areas of the State – but the trauma to those on the land remains. The long-term financial, farming and emotional impacts of a drought last long after it rains, says Jeff Young, a counsellor at La Trobe University's Bouverie Centre.

Mr Young trains drought counsellors. It can be a tricky job to engage rural people who would rather soldier on than seek help.

'They usually believe there is always someone worse off than them and tend to be suspicious of counsellors who are here today and gone tomorrow,' says Mr Young.

Mr Young has developed a style of counselling for people who are not sure about seeking help. His approach is called 'No bullshit therapy'. It has been successful in helping farmers adjust to drought because it taps into the communication style of the bush.

'No bullshit therapy' goes against conventional counselling wisdom which says that a counsellor should make a connection with a client in the first session then do the work down the track. 'International research shows that a significant number of clients attend just one session of counselling,' Mr Young says.

'At first people thought they had dropped out, but when the clients were followed up the feedback was that they only needed one session.' This finding led him to develop an approach that gets more out of the first session. Instead of slowly working toward what's important to a client, drought counsellors are trained to be upfront, direct, honest and warm.

'You cut to the chase and people seem to like it. It's provocative, even cheeky, but it leads to a real sense of authenticity. And it has a particular resonance with Aussie culture.'

In fact, says Mr Young, many local counsellors naturally adopt this method. The La Trobe label has helped provide a conceptual framework and validate their standing as closet 'no bullshit' therapists.

MORE INSIDIOUS THAN OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS

'It is not enough in the bush to put up a brass plate and expect people to turn up,' Mr Young says. 'Counsellors have to do community development work. They

have to tap into existing support structures, make links, establish relationships and even do cold calls on farms. It takes at least six months to establish a service.'

Drought is a far more insidious catastrophe than other acute natural

disasters, he says. Bushfires and floods attract an outpouring of community support and people are witnesses to the struggle. With drought there is no obvious start or finish, no donations.

'People can also drop their bundle after the rains come or the acute crisis eases,' he says. 'For example, families may put off discussing relationship issues during the crisis which come out after the drought breaks.'

Counsellors provide practical advice but also move towards emotional acknowledgment that the drought has been tough. 'Because of the slow and insidious onset of drought people affected may not even attribute the increased pressure on relationships to the drought', Mr Young says.

Mr Young is doing his PhD helping the State's drought counselling program document its work. It is a study that is more about action research than theory. Members of his research team visit services throughout the State for monthly meetings. They discuss what works and what doesn't, compare notes and document the practice wisdom across the state in a newsletter called *No Bull*.

This is the first time that a comprehensive body of knowledge about drought counselling has been created in the State, a valuable asset for the future for, if the past is anything to go by, one in every three is a drought year. ●

Copies of *No Bull* are available from Michelle Wills at the Bouverie Centre, email: m.wills@latrobe.edu.au



Dredging up the public costs

BY PETER TURNBULL



Peter Turnbull is Distinguished Fellow at La Trobe University's Institute for Advanced Study and Professor at Cardiff University Business School. This is a transcript of his commentary on 'Perspective' featured on ABC Radio National.

THE CONTROVERSY sparked by the dredging of Port Phillip Bay is one that is being repeated in developed countries around the world. In Europe, for example, the European Commission is giving serious consideration to proposals that might dilute environmental protection enjoyed by coastal areas under the Birds and Habitats Directive. The fear is not that major European ports will become 'backwaters' – to use the words of Victorian Premier John Brumby when justifying the dredging of Melbourne's principal access channel – but that environmental regulations now stand in the way of 'economic interests'.

But what are these 'economic interests'? Where does all the money go, and who pays the price?

The world economy has grown rapidly in recent years – world domestic product increased by 69 per cent between 1984 and 2004 – but this growth pales in comparison to the increase in world exports (at 195 per cent) and the export of manufactured goods (which was over 240 per cent over the same period).

These goods are shipped around the world on ever larger cellular container vessels, especially on the dominant east-west trade routes. Container traffic has experienced double-digit growth over the last decade and the very largest vessels now have the capacity to carry in excess of 12,000 container boxes when measured in Twenty-foot Equivalent Units.

The principal advantage of these ships is that they offer huge economies of scale – it is now claimed that it costs less to ship a container box from Shanghai to Southampton than it does to then move the box by road to Scotland. Globalisation might create a disproportionate growth in the demand for transport services, but innovations in transport fuel the growth of the global economy.

The 'freight factor' in developed countries is now less than 4 per cent, so it is quite literally possible to make almost anything, almost anywhere in the

world, and then ship it to almost anywhere else, without transport costs being a constraining factor.

But there is a downside. One of the principal disadvantages of ever larger container ships is likely to be the detrimental impact they can have on the city-port environment.

It's not simply the draft of these vessels that places much greater demands on our transport infrastructure – ports also need larger and stronger stacking areas for more container boxes, they need bigger cranes with greater 'outreach' to unload the ships, and better hinterland connections to cope with peak traffic demand.

A major concern of environmentalists and the communities of city-ports in Europe is that the construction of ever larger container vessels is nothing compared to the costs of dredging access channels, investing in more extensive container terminals, buying new equipment, and building new or improved access roads to the port.

So the key question is: who pays for all this investment? And do the benefits to the consumer outweigh the costs to the citizen?

In most ports, the costs associated with accommodating larger vessels are typically shared between the private and public sectors. Port super-structure – which is basically everything above, on and beyond the quay wall within the port area – is usually financed by the private sector.

Today, only a handful of trans-national corporations have the wherewithal to make the necessary investments in facilities capable of handling the very largest ships. This group includes the five major international shipping lines that now control well over 40 per cent of the

world's fleet and the four global container terminal operators who now control more than a third of world-wide port container port movements. So those who benefit most, in terms of their profits, also pay – but they don't pay for everything. Port infrastructure costs, most notably access channels, quay walls, and landside connections such as road and rail links, are still a public responsibility in most countries. So the taxpayer will also bear some of the cost.

Not surprisingly, a major concern of many people in city-port communities is the accountability and transparency of the relevant port authority. Do you know how your money is being spent?

There is a worldwide trend towards greater financial and operational autonomy for public port authorities, largely as a result of financial pressures on the public purse and the demands of major users, such as the big international shipping lines, for the ports to be more 'customer friendly'. So who benefits most from your taxes?

In the past, Europeans would have little difficulty answering this question. Major European ports have been developed as Maritime, Industrial and Distribution Areas (giving us the acronym 'MIDAS') and the maritime regions still account for over 40 per cent of the European Union's gross domestic product. The 'golden touch' of Europe's major ports helped to make the continent the richest in the world, but today we're looking for a 'greener fingerprint'.

So the next time you're stuck in traffic behind a container truck, breathing CO₂, try to calculate how many pairs of training shoes are stuffed inside the metal box in front of you. Then ask yourself the following question: 'If somebody, somewhere, in the transport chain saves a few dollars on the shipping costs of a container box from China to Europe, to Australia, or indeed anywhere else in the world, will the consumer now pay \$99.95 for a pair of trainers instead of \$100?' ●

Hold your breath!

Secrets in the pouch revealed

SOME MARSUPIALS are born so small they don't need lungs for their first few days of life. Understanding how the lung develops in newborn marsupials is part of award-winning research by a PhD student in Zoology.

Shannon Simpson recently won the Scholander Prize, the highest award for PhD or postdoctoral research in comparative physiology from the American Physiological Society, and a *Journal of Experimental Biology* (JEB) Travelling Fellowship.

The awards recognise her research on lung structure and function in the fat-tailed dunnart (*Sminthopsis crassicaudata*), a small nocturnal insect-eating marsupial.

The dunnart is born after just thirteen and a half days gestation – no bigger than a grain of rice. The immature newborn cannot regulate its body temperature, though the warm pouch of the mother removes the need to do this.

Thanks to the La Trobe research, scientists now know the animal also does not take its first breath until about four days after birth.

'This is remarkable. The newborn marsupial is to date the only example of a mammal that does not rely on its lungs for gas exchange,' says Ms Shannon's supervisor, Dr Peter Frappell.

Dr Frappell's work on newborn marsupials has challenged ideas of respiration in mammals and fascinated many with its insight into life in the marsupial pouch.

Why is it born so young? 'The answer,' he says, 'is that in general, the marsupial placenta is poorly interfaced with the uterine wall and it is possible the foetus has trouble obtaining enough nutrients and oxygen. Marsupials, therefore, are characterised by development in the pouch and prolonged reliance on lactation to raise their young'.

Because most marsupials are born so small – a mere 15 milligrams in weight in the case of the dunnart – they have a large surface area to volume ratio which favours gaseous exchange through their skin.

'They also have a very low metabolic rate and therefore if the skin is sufficient for gas exchange, the newborn dunnart doesn't need to have functioning lungs,' he adds.

In larger newborn marsupials some gas exchange also occurs through the skin. The tammar wallaby, for example, weighs in at 400 milligrams and obtains one third of its oxygen this way.

When Dr Frappell first discovered that the dunnart breathed through its skin, his research captured the public's imagination. How could a newborn marsupial survive without lung function? Did its apparent prematurity provide clues that could help explain lung development in other mammals – and possibly help in understanding problems associated

with breathing disorders in preterm babies?

The questions Dr Frappell had to field were a measure of the media's faith in scientists and their willingness to follow them down the path of speculation. Although he commented on these issues, Dr Frappell stresses that the dunnart research is more concerned with fundamental questions in respiratory physiology.

'We are trying to understand how the respiratory system develops,' he says. 'Shannon has taken this work a step further by integrating the physiology with morphology and functional genetics.' She has been involved in 3D reconstruction and calculations of the lung surface area of newborn dunnarts with colleagues from Monash University using Japan's SPring-8 synchrotron facility.

In conjunction with the Victorian Department of Primary Industries, she is also looking at which genes are expressed in the early stages when the immature lung is no more than a collection of simple air-sacs.

The *JEB* Travelling Fellowship enabled Ms Simpson to further her work in Professor John Greer's laboratory in the Centre for Neuroscience at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada. ●



Ms Simpson and dunnart.



La Trobe students at work in the Strathbogie Ranges and, left a burrowing crab, found deep underground.

The enigma of highland bogs

THERE IS NOTHING QUITE SO MYSTERIOUS AS A BOG.

It is ancient, damp and full of undescribed life. When all else is struck by drought, the bog remains a place where mayflies hatch, crayfish burrow and protozoans proliferate.

Environmentalists can become just as lyrical about these dwelling places as the poets of Ireland who have read bogs as subterranean metaphors for inward-looking cultures.

Australian bogs have fine views and are less dominated by individual species than their European counterparts, says one admirer, La Trobe environmentalist Dr Phil Suter.

Some sit on tops of hills or on slopes, earning them the names of 'perched' or 'hanging' bogs, yet they are fed by the upwelling of subterranean streams.

Only a handful of scientific papers have been published about Australian bogs, a situation that has prompted the Department of Environmental Management and Ecology at the Albury-Wodonga campus to make an expedition to the Strathbogie Ranges.

In August last year students recorded the biodiversity of species in bogs on three private properties in the ranges. They discovered that in certain groups up to seventy per cent of the species are undescribed in the scientific literature.

'Every bog is different,' Dr Suter says. 'This will make any rehabilitation difficult. If you use one method then you select for particular species.' He says that many of the methods developed in Europe do not apply here. Sphagnum moss, which dominates in the north, varies in distribution in the south.

For student environmentalists, the exciting thing is working with local communities. Their research has gone into a field guide for the local Landcare group. 'It is much harder than you think identifying where one species ends and another begins,' says Dr Susan Lawler, who had the unenviable task of collating the samples for the field guide.

She estimates there were 20-30 species of algae, a similar number of microscopic plant species called diatoms and hundreds of insects.

'This is just the first step,' she says, 'in finding out what's there. It's quite surprising that we found such diversity in what were really just green patches on farmers' paddocks. We pushed aside sheep, climbed fences and got down on our hands and knees in the mud.' The La Trobe scientists were invited onto the

properties by the farmers. Up until now the bogs have been secret places.

They raise issues, says Dr Lawler, about conservation. The bogs have kept the farmers going during the drought yet she cannot help wonder how they would bounce back if stock were fenced out.

Dr Doug Robinson, regional manager for the Trust for Nature, says he is delighted with the University's involvement in the perched bog project.

'These bogs are unique ecosystems which are beginning to reveal new species for Australia, as well as a host of specialised animals and plants that depend on these particular boggy wetlands,' he says.

'More than seventy per cent of our bogs have been destroyed and every remaining one is extremely important as a refuge for these specialised species of bog wildlife. La Trobe's commitment to identifying some of these species has created much interest among landholders and Landcare in the Strathbogie Ranges and we believe it will enthrall locals to help protect these unique bogs.' ●